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Portrayal of women in advertisement as a persuasion technique: A study of television advertisement

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Abstract

The advertisement is used to communicate business, social or product information to the present and prospective customers. Through an advertisement, the advertiser wants to spread his idea about his/her products among his/her customers. In a contemporary modern age of large scale production producers cannot think of pushing sales of their product. The advertisement contains a call to action that is either implicit or explicit. In simple word, it implies that either you need this product or make you come out and tell you to have it. In the concern of their product selling, they chose a brand ambassador or a model (male or female) for presenting their product to the public or customer. This paper will concentrate on the portrayal of women in the television advertisement. This will also show how genuine the representation of women depicted in television ads and how much the portrayal of women affects the attitude of the viewers. Woman generally presented as submissive, intelligent or beautiful in Indian television so this may also be excited to watch out do they present a woman in advertisement is like product or commodity.

Keywords: Women in advertisement, persuasion technique, television advertisement

Introductions

The word advertising originated from the Latin word 'adverto' which means to turn to. So, advertising employed a meaning to draw attention to any object. Through ads, advertisers want to spread his ideas to his users. Advertising is a means of communication to the masses (here masses denotes to the users) of the product or service. Advertising is ubiquitous; no one can hide from its influence. In contemporary time advertising uses every single media to get its message spread to its public, print (Newspaper, magazine, journals etc.), television, press, hoardings, mailing, direct sailing etc.

According to an American Marketing Association has defined "advertising as any paid form of none- personal presentation of ideas, goods, and services by an identified sponsor". According to Webster, "advertising is to give public notes or to announce publicity". The concept of advertising is not new; its origin lies thousands of years ago. One of the popular advertising methods in the ancient era is in the form of eye-catching signs painted on the wall of a building. Archaeologists have found many such signs notably in the ruins of ancient Rome and Pompeii.

An early advertising success story is about 'Pears Soap'. Thomas Barratt married into the soap making family where he realized that they need to push their product more effectively if wish to survive for long. Later he launched the series of ads featuring cherubic children, which strongly welded the brand and it still holds that value today. Thomas Barratt is often referred as the father of modern advertisement.

Vance Packard, an author of the book 'Hidden Persuader' (1957) stated that 'marketers are always watching the way of our life so that they can more effectively manipulate our habits in their favor', (cited in portrayal of women in Indian Television advertisement: an exploratory study, 2009)

Types of advertising

An advertisement may not be successful until you choose a right type of advertising medium to target the audience. The most suitable advertising option for any business will depend on its target audience. That medium must be cost effective and able to reach on time to as much as its target audience. There are list advertisement types that anyone can use while he is going through with its selecting period.

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1. **Newspaper:** Newspaper advertisement helps to promote a product to a wide range of customers. This carries display advertisement throughout the paper. While classified ads listed subject headings in a specific section.
2. **Magazine:** specialized magazine reaches to its target audience quickly and easily. Readers tend to read magazines and keep them for a long time and give multiple chances to attract attention. Colored advertisement printed on glossy pages that can be ideal as it looks attractive while someone seeing it. Although they are more expensive than newspaper advertisements.
3. **Radio:** its reach is wider than any other medium because it also includes people who are not literate or unable to read the paper or afford on daily basis. It is a great way to reach your target audience. However sound has limited and people can not remember this for so long. This medium is cost effective.
4. **Television:** television has an extensive reach. Advertising in this way could be ideal for promoting or showing a product. Television advertisements have pros of sight, sound, movement, and color to persuade their target audience. Through television, everything seems real so it becomes easy for marketers to influence consumers easily and effectively.



Fig 1: Television Advertisement

Producing an advertisement on television and buy advertisement slot for special time may increase your expenses. Television advertisements are generally expensive in nature. These kinds of Advertising sold in units for instance 20, 30 and 60 seconds and cost vary according to:-

- Time slot
- Television programme
- Whether it is regional, national or international channel
- If you want to buy spots on multiple channels it will vary cost according to time, program which is going to on air on that particular time.

Persuasion technique

This is a technique where an advertiser needs to influence his customer to buy his product. Today’s consumer is not that much easy to understand so, for this concern there is need to understand their need first later convert it into according to their taste. This technique used in advertisement, specifically pathos as emotions, logos as logic and ethos as credibility character. Advertisers use this knowledge to analyse advertising in a Variety of source such as television, print, web etc.

There are two type of consumer from the view point of advertising technique one is highly involved consumer and another is an uninvolved consumer. There are two routes to directly interact or persuade consumer towards the product is central route and peripheral route. The central route to persuasion is highly achieved because it has more effective reach through advertisement and more focused on a specific attribute of the product. It is based on logic and used when to have to make a large purchase decision like buying a phone. Being a consumer before buying a product we all tend to research about that product which we are going to buy. We will get all the information to make a right decision about that product. Purchasing a phone could be an example for this kind of persuasion.

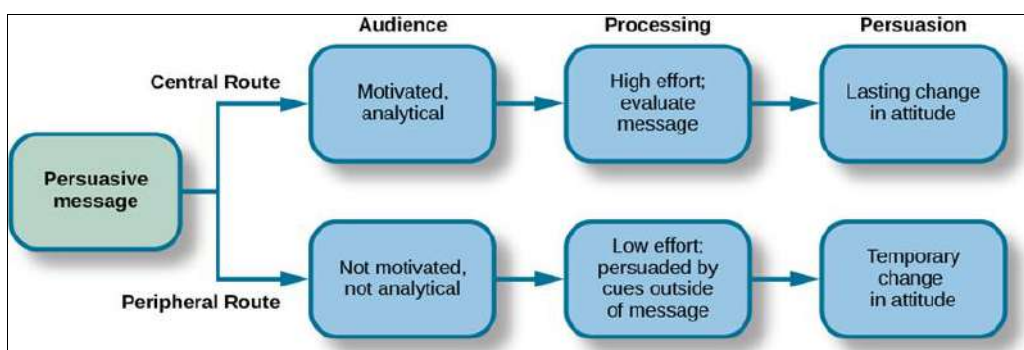


Fig 2: Routes of persuade consumer

Peripheral route of persuasion technique directed the uninvolved consumer as it is more attractive to grab consumer’s attention through peripheral advertising such as specific hot and attractive model in the advertisement. For instance, a consumer buys clothes not because he love to that one but the model who wears that clothing is so attractive that to being so she is enough to attract the consumer effectively. After seeing that model, consumer sometimes never thinks about the product quality.

Advertising and women

Gender has an important role to play in advertising a product. It is not only described socially constructed men

and women disparity but also show masculinity and femininity (Dominelli, 2007, p.29). David Gauntlett uses the depictions of masculinity, femininity and to a lesser extent sexuality in a verity of media- men and women magazines, television, films, popular music and self- help book- to explore how these representations impact women and men self- identities in UK and US (media, gender, and identity: an introduction, 2002) [6].

Since the arrival of the advertising years ago, women have been objectified, insulted and presented in a wrong way as well. The year 2010 has shown Jean Kilbourne’s a five-minute video that went viral and stabbed over 2 million over views. It covered up the negative effect of advertising on

women and girls. In the beginning of her video she also mentions, things have not gotten better, in fact they have gotten worse. And now we can also see things have not changed yet, we saw things in the same pattern of objectification and unnecessarily use of semi-naked women in an advertising campaign to gain TRP's or gaining publicity. In one of her lecture "the naked truth: advertising's image of women," Jean Kilbourne said about how the image of women has changed over the past years. So many problems today, such as rape and another form of violence, eating disorder, smoking habits, drinking habits are considered as women issues. Sometimes the people who needed the most are feeling unwilling and hesitant to attend such kind of lectures on these topics. Through this presentation, she also points out entertaining and fast paced sometime hilarious (by Jean Kalibourne pioneering activist, speaker, and writer). However, today's problem does not stop at the sight of sex it's beyond that. These seventies and eighties semi naked women are different from today. With the advent of technology, editing software come up with its great quality make the models more glamorous, flawless and more attractive but today's featured famous actress does not want to edit as they can harm them in many levels.

Women as an ideal image

Sometimes advertisements show what we cannot even believe in our dreams. The features of these kinds of women are:-
 Women have flawless skin without wrinkles and any mark on her face.
 Her waist looks small and so shaped just like a doll.
 Her eyes are dazzling bright and her hair is silky and long.
 A tooth seems like beyond white as if milk poured over it.
 We generally heard this kind of desire through stories. It seems difficult to believe in these kinds of ads. Our childhood has been discovered to hear such stories, in which such fictional images were found in stories like Cinderella and Snow White. This is our problem we do not want to live in the real world, want to explore what does not exist anywhere. Women shown on advertisements do not exist in reality. She is only the product of an hour carry put makeup on her face that will disappear after few minute. No women can be so perfect. How can we think that much so while we all know she is also a human being? In advertising, these women are a creation of the industry that obsessed with perfection and through these ads they claiming to other women and men to use that product and claim this product will help them to achieve the impossible goal that has set.



Fig 3: Picture of deadly persuasion examines the body shop product

This picture of deadly persuasion examines the body shop product. This also focuses on such ads that encourage consumers to be mindless and to feel the passion for the product rather than people. Why these advertisers want us to feel a relationship with the product especially the addicted one. What the above picture shows about women we all can see. Why it is always necessary to showcase women like this only. Is this not looking provoking someone to use that product and be like the man as that man? This is an ad about a product not about to sale out this type of sexuality on television.



Fig 4: Picture shows the peripheral route of persuasion

The above picture shows the peripheral route of persuasion. She is model Kate Upton an attractive model eating a hamburger and which may be not normally classified as sexy but in this ad she is. This type of advertisement does not require too much promotion or any second chance to hit a product because this what hit in our society today. Now for some range of concern, we should move towards few Indian advertisements. Ample of examples are available in our Indian industry who generally being so obsessed with the word perfection. Generally men in advertising are presented in commanding position or in action position where as women are rarely presented in these kinds of a pose. The gender representation in advertising is highlighted the active role of male and passive, submissive, domestic and dependent role of women.

There are few examples of Indian advertisements discussed below:



Fig 5: Katrina kaif is a Brand ambassador of this product

This is an Indian mango flavored drink called slice. Katrina kaif is a Brand ambassador of this product. She is one of the top most actresses in India. The ad put her inside bottle and merge with drink then offers her as a date.



Fig 6: An appeal shows visual language and persuasive device

Here Anushka Sharma is the face of this product. Instead of advertising the product through direct appeal they choose an appeal shows visual language and persuasive device. This shows the cultural context of the product where Indian beauty standards have been exposed. This appeal chooses persuasive technique by creating foundation and development basis. Appeals for this ad are as: a need for intimacy, the need to achieve, need for aesthetic sensation, a need for prominence. We can prove the need for intimacy by seeing the evident between these two models. Nivea wants you to buy this and get intimate with your partner or get a life partner.

Conclusion

It has become an important topic to discuss research and debate about the portrayal of women in advertisements for a considerable time. The above study had been conducted to find out how women are being used in ads for promoting a product. Men and Women body language portrayal in different manner in different advertisement or the single one. Where men represented as expressive, control and dominant, women as shy, dreamy, likely to be manipulated and helpless (Ford and LA Tour, 1996). Study suggested that women are represented as appealing to showcase a product. If a model in ad looking attractive and make a sexual appeal that means it normally cross that brand earlier record so easily. Women have become the main target group for the advertisers both as the product and service provider. Though women are entering into the work force but yet not gain that much value they really deserve. Advertisers have failed to depict the real achievement of women through media. Women are still strictly dominated by the so called old age gender construction and traditional role. Women are either being portrayal as a home setting or as an object of sexual gratification.

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